

Coins

A fan faces confusion

By Roger Boye

HERE ARE answers to some more questions from Tribune readers:

Q—Abe Lincoln faces right on the cent, but Presidents shown on our other coins face left. Why is that? I called the Philadelphia Mint for an answer, but they were unable to help me—L.B., Chicago Heights.

A—It's merely a coincidence. Many coin designs, no longer minted, have right-facing portraits, including Ben Franklin on the half-dollar, the Indian on the Buffalo nickel, and Miss Liberty on the Barber dime, quarter, and half.

Q—My father gave me a 1969-C \$1 bill with a star at the end of the serial number. Does it have any special value?—M.W., Chicago.

A—The Bureau of Engraving and Printing replaces bills mutilated in the printing process with an equal number of notes bearing a star in the serial number. The star notes are used since it would be costly and difficult for the bureau to replace each destroyed note with a bill bearing an identical serial number.

Star notes generally are worth slightly more to collectors than the same bills with regular numbers. However, the 1969-C \$1 bill is rather common; so your "star note" would have almost no collector value unless it was in uncirculated condition.

Q—I'm interested in collecting coins and would like to know how to get on the mailing list for proof sets from the U.S. Mint—R.R., Melrose Park.

A—Unfortunately, the ordering period for 1978 proof sets is over. However, you can still write the Bureau of the Mint (55 Mint St., San Francisco, Cal. 94175) and ask to be placed on the computerized mailing list so you automatically will receive a proof-set ordering card next year.

Q—The serial number on my \$1 bill is printed over, not above, the words "Washington, D.C." This is the first such \$1 bill I have found, and I would appreciate information about its value to collectors—J.N., River Grove.

A—The two serial numbers, the Treasury seal, and the Federal Reserve seal are printed together in a separate step called the "overprint," but sometimes they are not aligned properly. A minor misalignment is a rather common error, and such bills have little, if any, collector value.

However, the bill you describe has a more impressive error and is probably worth saving. Catalog estimates of "average dealer selling prices" for such bills vary, with the price depending on the degree of misalignment and the condition of the bill. One widely used catalog suggests that a dealer might sell a bill such as yours in extremely fine condition for about \$10; an uncirculated specimen, about \$20.